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ABSTRACT

This evaluation report describes the Quality Improvement Program Plan for Special Educators (QUIPP) which provides supplemental professional development opportunities for New York City special education professionals and paraprofessionals at the elementary, middle, and intermediate/junior high school levels. The program stresses design of the professional development program by program participants. Evaluation findings are reported for the following areas: program planning and implementation; eligible participant survey feedback; and actual participant survey/feedback. Recomendations include: (1) increase networking with other districts; (2) provide more information about the QUIPP program to eligible participants; (3) provide a greater variety of schedule choices; and (4) provide funds for a QUIPP administrator at the district level. (DB)

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# OREA Report

## 1990-91
## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
## PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATORS
## (QUIPP)

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# 1990-91
# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
# PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATORS
# (QUIPP)

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# Quality Improvement Program Plan for Special Educators
1990-91

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

The Quality Improvement Program Plan for Special Educators (QUIPP) provides supplemental professional development opportunities for special education professionals. Its goal is to increase the knowledge and instructional abilities of the special education staff in order to improve the quality of instruction for students with handicapping conditions. QUIPP was designed so that its recipients would be the primary designers of the professional development program. This was accomplished through surveys of their professional development interests, and through their representatives on the QUIPP District Advisory Committee (DAC).

### POPULATION SERVED

QUIPP addresses the professional development interests of special education teachers and paraprofessionals in the elementary, middle, and intermediate/junior high schools of the 32 community school districts and the Louis Armstrong Middle School (IS 227). Initially, QUIPP was designed to serve special education self-contained classroom teachers, resource room teachers, crisis intervention teachers, speech teachers, and paraprofessionals who deliver services to special education students. Over the years, however, QUIPP has expanded to include other related special education personnel. Thus, special education teacher trainers, language coordinators, health coordinators, and general education teachers who provide classroom coverage to special education staff (Module 5B) have become eligible to participate in QUIPP activities. In 1990-91, the program was again expanded to include first-year special education teachers and those who provide instruction to mainstreamed students.

### FINDINGS

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) gathered information from DAC members, program participants, and staff members eligible for program participation, through surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and site visits. For the 1990-91 school year, the major evaluation findings were as follows:

Program Planning and Implementation

- The degree of member involvement in the development of the district's QUIPP plan has increased from previous years. In addition, more teachers and paraprofessionals have become involved in the implementation of the program this year.

- The working style of most DACs has continued to be collaborative, cooperative, and participatory.

- Awareness of the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) and its purpose has increased somewhat among DAC members.

Eligible Participant Survey Feedback

- Almost all of the survey respondents were at least somewhat aware of the QUIPP program. However, the eligible staff needs to become more aware of their DACs.

- Among the features that respondents liked best about the program were the variety of courses and formats offered; the emphasis on practical, hands-on activities; and the fact that the offerings are based on input from the participants.

Actual Participant Survey Feedback

- Participants in QUIPP activities rated the instructors' knowledge of the subject and ability to relate to adult learners very positively.

- The professional development activities were found to be organized, comprehensive, stimulating, and practical.

- Participants stated that the activity materials were applicable to the subject and facilitated their learning, and that they received adequate supplies for their classrooms.

- Many of the respondents stated that participating in the activities made them feel more refreshed, competent, and confident with students.

- Most of the participants who applied what they had learned from QUIPP activities in their classrooms reported positive changes in their students.

## CONCLUSIONS

The overall response to the QUIPP program was positive at both the central and district levels. Awareness of CAC has become more consistent among DAC members, and those who have had contact with CAC stated that communication has been helpful and supportive.

The DACs have, once again, been very successful in providing high quality, district-based, participant-driven professional development programs. The process of planning and implementing the QUIPP program was rated positively by DAC members, who continued to describe their committees as collaborative, cooperative, and participatory. More teachers and paraprofessionals became involved in the administrative tasks and the planning and implementation of the program this year than in previous years.

Respondents who participated in QUIPP activities gave positive ratings to the quality of activities, instructors, and materials. Those who have had the opportunity to apply what they learned from QUIPP activities in their classrooms reported positive changes in their students' interest and involvement in learning. Most respondents indicated that their expectations of QUIPP activities were met, and that participation positively affected their feelings of competence and confidence with students.

This evaluation also identified the need for more networking between DACs and more distribution of information about the QUIPP program to eligible participants.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for improving the QUIPP program are based on the results of this evaluation, and suggestions provided by eligible and actual participants and DAC members.

### District Advisory Committee

- Increase networking with other districts. This could be accomplished by establishing cross-district meetings and newsletters.
- Provide information about the QUIPP program to increase eligible participants' awareness of the program, their DAC, and the requirements for eligibility.
- Provide more variety, and room for suggestions, on the Interest Inventories.

- Distribute registration information earlier. The information should specify the times and dates of the activities and credits earned from participation.

- Provide a greater variety of schedule choices, including weekend, evening, and summer options.

- Attempt to reach more first-year special education teachers to facilitate their registration and participation in QUIPP.

- Investigate the possibility of attending courses in other districts for eligible participants who have specialized interests or scheduling difficulties.

Central Advisory Committee

- Provide a QUIPP publication that offers both basic information about the program and more assistance to DACs in regard to planning successful programs.

- Facilitate networking among districts through yearly QUIPP conferences.

- Provide funds for a QUIPP administrator at the district level.

- Provide DACs with training to improve communication, collaboration, decision-making, and team building.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report has been prepared by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment/Student Progress Evaluation Unit (OREA/S.P.E.U.) of the New York City Public Schools under the direction of Dr. Henry Solomon. Barbara Young, an evaluation consultant, served as project coordinator and prepared this report. Without the effort and help of other unit staff and consultants, this report would not have been possible. We are grateful to the following people for their able assistance: Frank Guerrero, Maria Rosario Mora, Eddy Souffrant, Loretty Edwards, and the data unit for the statistical analysis. Editorial assistance was provided by Roberta Lynch, Carol Meyer, and Joan Katz.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Quality Improvement Program Plan for Special Educators (QUIPP) is a supplemental, professional development program. The goal of QUIPP is to increase the knowledge and instructional abilities of special education professionals in order to improve the quality of instruction for students with handicapping conditions. QUIPP is a district-based, participant-driven, professional development opportunity. Since its inception in 1987, QUIPP has promoted a collaborative, participatory process of planning and decision-making. While a certain amount of direction and coordination is provided by a Central Advisory Committee (CAC), the program was designed so that its recipients would have direct input into the QUIPP activities offered in their district. The program constituencies influence the development of this program through their representatives on the QUIPP District Advisory Committee (DAC), and through their responses to a survey (Interest Inventory) of their professional development interests. Each DAC addresses local needs by developing its own professional development plan based on an analysis of the responses to these surveys.

The program has been a collaboration between the New York City Public Schools and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), in consultation with the Council of Supervisors and Administrators (C.S.A.). It has been funded by the New York State Incentive Grant for Improving Pupil Performance.

## POPULATION SERVED

QUIPP addresses the professional development interests of special education teachers and paraprofessionals in the elementary and intermediate/junior high schools of the 32 community school districts and the Louis Armstrong Middle School (IS 227). Initially, QUIPP was designed to serve special education self-contained classroom teachers, resource room teachers, crisis intervention teachers, speech teachers, and paraprofessionals who deliver services to special education students. Over the years, however, QUIPP has expanded to include other related special education personnel. Thus, special education teacher trainers, language coordinators, health coordinators, and general education teachers who provide classroom coverage to special education staff (Module 5B) have become eligible to participate in QUIPP activities. In 1990-91, the program was again expanded to include first-year special education teachers and those who provide instruction to mainstreamed students.

## QUIPP DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

During 1987-88, when QUIPP was established, each community school district formed a DAC. Each DAC was designed to be a permanent committee composed of 12 members, including not only district administrators but also school- and classroom-based educators. These committees, therefore, placed representatives of the eligible population in decision-making roles. Each DAC was responsible for developing and implementing a program of

professional development activities based on the eligible staff's professional development interests.

Although the committee was designed to be permanent, in the event that changes were necessary, the guidelines specified that the recommended number and configuration of work titles of its members be maintained. The teachers, paraprofessionals, and supervisory members of DACs were designated by their respective union representatives. Additional resource members, such as teacher trainers, were often selected by the committee to assist with various aspects of program planning and implementation.

QUIPP CENTRAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The CAC assures district compliance with the guidelines of the program and provides technical assistance to the DACs. It is comprised of representatives from the UFT, the C.S.A., and the Division of Instruction and Professional Development of the New York City Public Schools. A designated member representing the District Administrators of Special Education (DASE) also serves on the committee. Resource members (e.g., Assistant Director of the Office of Budget and Review) provide assistance as needed.

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

As in previous years, DACs distributed an Interest Inventory survey to eligible QUIPP participants in order to assess their professional development interests. Each DAC developed its own QUIPP program based on an analysis of this survey. As a result, a variety of topics were offered, including those of general interest to the special education staff and other topics that

focused on more specific staff interests and responsibilities (courses specifically for one type of teacher, for example, MIS-I). In addition, districts provided a variety of activity formats, such as workshops, college courses, and weekend retreats.

Program guidelines stipulated that eligible participants could receive compensation for up to 30 hours of participation in activities offered during non-school hours. Those selecting college or university courses were enrolled tuition-free in lieu of receiving the hourly training rate. It was sometimes possible for participants to attend more than one activity, since not every option met the minimum hourly requirements. Furthermore, teachers who wanted to attend more than 30 hours of training activities were encouraged to do so, although they could be compensated for only 30 hours of participation. Activities were to be offered to groups of no more than 25 persons.

Only teachers of self-contained classrooms could be released from their classrooms to attend QUIPP activities during school hours, and then only on the condition that class coverage be provided and staffing ratios be maintained. Other eligible participants (e.g., paraprofessionals and resource room teachers) could participate in QUIPP activities only during non-school hours.

## EVALUATION SCOPE AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the evaluation for 1990-91 was to assess the district-organized, participant-driven process upon which QUIPP was based. The quality of the resultant QUIPP activities and the activities' impact on participating special educators and their students was also assessed. The evaluation instruments were developed by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) in consultation with the QUIPP program director. Information was gathered through surveys of and interviews with DAC members, eligible participants, and actual participants.

## SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report presents OREA's evaluation of the QUIPP program for the 1990-91 school year. Chapter II examines the process district committees followed in planning and implementing the QUIPP program. Chapter III focuses on the eligible participants' awareness of QUIPP and their assessment of the information they received regarding QUIPP activities. The quality of the activities and the program's impact on QUIPP participants and their students is also discussed. Chapter IV presents OREA's conclusions and recommendations based on this year's evaluation.

## II. PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

### QUIPP DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEES (DACs)

In spring 1991, OREA evaluators sent closed-ended questionnaires to all DAC members in the 32 districts and the Louis Armstrong Middle School (IS 227). These surveys addressed the planning and organization of the QUIPP program by DACs. Eighty percent of the surveys were returned (316 responses).

#### Meeting Schedules

Scheduling of DAC meetings needed to be convenient for both classroom and non-classroom-based members. Meetings were held either during or after school hours, depending on the needs of the staff in each district; and 83 percent of the respondents claimed that the meetings were convenient. However, one-third of responding principals and district coordinators stated that the meetings were not convenient.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

QUIPP guidelines described the overall tasks necessary for implementing a district-organized, participant-driven program, such as distribution of the Interest Inventory and preparation of a QUIPP plan. However, aside from indicating that a chairperson be appointed, no further instructions were given concerning the roles and responsibilities of members.

As can be seen in Table 1, almost all members surveyed reported that they participated in discussions and decisions at DAC meetings. Involvement in other tasks was largely dependent

on the position of the DAC member. For example, DASEs were heavily involved in planning course content and organizing program activities, while teachers and paraprofessionals were more involved in promoting QUIPP in the schools and gathering feedback from school-based staff.

TABLE 1

Perceived Roles and Responsibilities
of DAC Members, By Staff Position
(N=315)

| Roles and Responsibilities | Percent of Responses by Position | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Teacher (N=117) | Para. (N=35) | Supv. (N=38) | Princ. (N=28) | DASE (N=20) | Other* (N=77) |
| Participate in discussions & decisions | 96.6 | 94.3 | 97.4 | 96.4 | 95.0 | 89.6 |
| Promote in schools | 81.2 | 80.0 | 81.6 | 67.9 | 65.0 | 70.1 |
| Plan course content | 74.4 | 54.3 | 81.6 | 71.4 | 85.0 | 79.2 |
| Gather teacher/para input and feedback | 76.9 | 71.4 | 71.1 | 42.9 | 50.0 | 71.4 |
| Administrative tasks | 76.9 | 65.7 | 65.8 | 35.7 | 50.0 | 79.2 |
| Represent a constituency | 70.9 | 88.6 | 42.1 | 64.3 | 15.0 | 40.3 |
| Organize program activities | 53.8 | 42.9 | 57.9 | 25.0 | 80.0 | 75.3 |
| Other | 13.7 | 2.9 | 10.5 | 3.6 | 15.0 | 13.0 |

*This category includes teacher trainers and district staff.

- Almost all DAC members indicated that they participated in discussions and decisions at DAC meetings.
- The degree of involvement in other tasks depended on the staff member's position.

In contrast to the previous year's results, more teachers and paraprofessionals reported involvement in administrative tasks (an increase from 59 and 44 percent, respectively). However, fewer principals and DASEs stated that they were involved in these tasks (a decrease from 59 and 80 percent, respectively), which might indicate that the classroom-based DAC members were becoming more involved with the management of their district's QUIPP program.

Another difference from past years is the degree and nature of member involvement in the development of the district's QUIPP plan, as can be seen in Table 2. Interestingly, both principals and DASEs were significantly less involved in the development of the plan. Last year, 41 percent of principals and 93 percent of DASEs were heavily involved, compared with 19 percent and 75 percent, respectively, this year. In contrast, slightly more teachers, paraprofessionals, and supervisors were heavily involved. This would seem to indicate that responsibility for developing the QUIPP plan might be shifting from administrative staff to the school-based staff.

OREA evaluators also conducted interviews in ten of the districts. The interviews revealed that the involvement of school-based members (teachers and paraprofessionals) in the implementation of the QUIPP plan was not consistent across the districts. In five of these districts, teachers and paraprofessionals became as involved in the implementation of the QUIPP plan as district office staff, while in the other five

districts, implementation was primarily the responsibility of district staff (teacher trainers, supervisors, and DASEs). This appears to indicate that in some districts responsibility for implementing the plan has also shifted from the administrative to school-based staff.

TABLE 2

Level of Involvement in Development of the QUIPP Plan, By Staff Position (N = 305)

| Position | Percent of Respondents | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Heavily Involved | Moderately Involved | Slightly Involved | Not Involved |
| Teacher (N=110) | 44.5 | 44.5 | 4.5 | 6.4 |
| Paraprofessional (N=35) | 37.1 | 51.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 |
| Supervisor (N=38) | 52.6 | 36.8 | 10.5 | 0.0 |
| Principal (N=26) | 19.2 | 46.2 | 23.1 | 11.5 |
| DASE (N=20) | 75.0 | 15.0 | 0.0 | 10.0 |
| Dist. Coord'r (N=8) | 75.0 | 25.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Teacher Trainer (N=40) | 72.5 | 17.5 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| District Staff (N=28) | 50.0 | 39.3 | 10.7 | 0.0 |
| Overall | 49.5 | 38.0 | 7.2 | 5.2 |

- Overall, school-based staff were somewhat less involved in the development of their QUIPP plan than were district-based staff.

DAC Working Styles

DACs were free to develop their own guidelines for the process they would follow in working together. Most respondents noted that planning was based on input from all members, and that DACs worked collaboratively in developing the QUIPP plan (see Table 3). As one member commented, "There is a very open atmosphere, [and] everyone feels free to speak." However, there was a small number of requests from DAC members for training in collaboration and team-building.

TABLE 3

DAC Working Process
(N=307)

| Working Style | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Planning based on input from all members | 83.7 |
| DAC works collaboratively in developing the QUIPP plan | 78.8 |
| Full participation of all members at meetings | 75.9 |
| Suggestions from members were considered during planning | 70.4 |
| Decisions made by consensus | 69.7 |
| Opinions of members were sought out at DAC meetings | 55.0 |

- More than 78 percent of DAC members stated that planning was collaborative and based on input from all members.

## PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

### Planning/Design of the District QUIPP Plan

The most important factors influencing the planning process are summarized in Table 4. Other factors included successful features of other districts' plans, special interests of DAC members, and the decrease in funding provided this year.

TABLE 4

Factors Influencing the Design of District QUIPP Plans
(N=316)

| Considerations | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Interest Inventory results | 91.5 |
| Evaluation results of previous year's plan | 62.0 |
| District policies, goals & objectives | 60.4 |
| Availability of existing courses & workshops | 57.0 |
| Availability of qualified instructors | 50.6 |
| Participant experience and education | 48.7 |

- Over 90 percent of the respondents indicated that Interest Inventory results influenced the design of their district's QUIPP plan.

Overall, 97 percent of responding DAC members claimed that they were satisfied with the process used by their DAC in planning and organizing the QUIPP plan for this year. In addition, DAC members made suggestions for further improving the operations of the committee in their district. As in previous years, the most frequently mentioned suggestion of members was to increase networking with other DACs in order to share information

on DAC operations and successful activities. However, very few districts reported that their DAC networked with other districts. This is surprising, given that networking has been mentioned as a priority over several years. When networking did occur, it was typically at teacher trainer and DASE borough meetings. Increasing teacher and paraprofessional involvement was the second most often mentioned suggestion, followed by the suggestion that DACs should begin planning earlier and meet more often.

Program Implementation

In order to successfully implement the QUIPP plan, discussions at DAC meetings often focused on promoting QUIPP, increasing registration and attendance, and offering joint training for teachers and paraprofessionals. Another of the major concerns this year was the possibility of continued funding for QUIPP. Comments from DAC respondents were similar to the following:

- "Everyone in the district now knows about QUIPP and is anxious to be involved in its activities. It has increased the morale, motivation, and interest of the staff. Please do not discontinue funding now that it's working so well."

The QUIPP guidelines provided built-in incentives for participants, such as college credits toward a higher degree (a maximum of three credits for each participant per year) or a salary differential. Free materials were also provided to participants, when applicable.

In addition, DACs promoted participation in QUIPP activities by distributing flyers, memos, and other printed materials to the eligible staff inviting them to participate. In most districts, DAC members also met with teachers and paraprofessionals to discuss the QUIPP program and its offerings. In addition, in some districts, QUIPP liaisons or coordinators were appointed to, in part, promote QUIPP activities.

Furthermore, 57 percent of the respondents stated that colleagues who had previously participated in QUIPP encouraged them to register. Past participants explained that QUIPP participants were treated as professionals, and that QUIPP provided an opportunity to network with colleagues throughout the district.

Registration. Sixty-two percent of the respondents claimed that registration in their district this year was excellent, and another 34 percent depicted it as satisfactory. However, respondents (both DAC members and participants) also suggested that more mainstream teachers be involved in the program. As one respondent noted, "As an integrated program, it could make general education professionals understand special education issues and help to mainstream students."

## QUIPP CENTRAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

### DAC Members' Relationship with CAC

Awareness of CAC and its purpose has become somewhat more consistent among DAC members over the years. As Table 5 shows, over 80 percent of DAC members were aware of its purpose and/or

existence in 1990-91. As compared to last year's findings, an increase in awareness of CAC's existence and purpose was found among all respondent categories, with the exception of DASFs.

Those DAC members who have had contact with the Central Advisory Committee described this contact as helpful and supportive. However, more than one-half (55 percent) of the respondents indicated that they would like more information about CAC, including the function and composition of the committee.

TABLE 5

DAC Members' Awareness of the QUIPP
Central Advisory Committee, By Position
(N=302)

| Awareness of Committee | Position | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Teacher (N=113) | Para. (N=34) | Supv./ Prin. (N=60) | DASE (N=19) | District Office (N=76) |
| Aware of CAC existence and purpose | 43.4 | 50.0 | 43.3 | 57.9 | 60.5 |
| Aware only of CAC existence | 38.0 | 41.2 | 40.0 | 31.6 | 29.0 |
| Unaware of CAC | 18.6 | 8.8 | 16.7 | 10.5 | 10.5 |

- Over 80 percent of DAC members were aware of CAC's purpose and/or its existence.

Suggestions from DAC members focused on improving communication between CAC and DACs, and on ways in which the CAC could improve the operations of DACs. Members suggested that CAC send representatives to DAC meetings, have regular meetings with DAC chairs, provide DACs with administrative support to handle

the paperwork involved in implementing QUIPP plans, provide networking opportunities for DACs, and provide DACs with information on how other DACs operate and successful aspects of other QUIPP plans. DAC members also indicated the need for specific information regarding the program guidelines, including the selection and replacement of members, and the role and function of voting and resource members.

## III. PROGRAM OPERATION FINDINGS

### SURVEY OF ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

In the first phase of the evaluation, OREA sent surveys to all eligible participants in the 32 districts and the Louis Armstrong Middle School (IS 227). A total of 3,121 of the special education staff responded to the eligible participant survey, representing 38 percent of the eligible population in these districts. OREA also sent a two-member team to visit ten districts and conduct structured interviews with 27 eligible participants. The surveys and interviews addressed the planning, organizing, and implementation of the QUIPP program.

#### Participant Awareness of QUIPP

As can be seen in Table 6, almost all of the responding eligible participants were at least somewhat aware of the QUIPP program. However, more than three-quarters (77 percent) of the respondents also stated that they would like further information about QUIPP. Areas in which information was requested included the goals and objectives of the program, program planning and implementation (including how workshops and schedules are decided), who is eligible to participate, how to obtain information about QUIPP registration, and the history and funding of QUIPP.

TABLE 6

Eligible Participants' Awareness of QUIPP
(N=3,070)

| Position | Percent of Respondents | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Aware of QUIPP | Somewhat Aware | Not Aware |
| First-Year Teachers (N=315) | 73.2 | 20.1 | 6.7 |
| Teachers (N=1638) | 92.5 | 6.0 | 1.4 |
| Paraprofessionals (N=624) | 81.3 | 11.6 | 7.1 |
| Language/Health Coordinators (N=46) | 93.5 | 6.5 | 0.0 |
| General Education (Mod 5) Teachers (N=20) | 60.0 | 30.0 | 10.0 |
| Teacher Trainers (N=31) | 100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Other[a] (N=396) | 85.1 | 10.9 | 4.1 |

[a]This category includes speech teachers and guidance counselors.

- Almost all respondents were at least somewhat aware of the QUIPP program.

Participant Awareness of the District Advisory Committee (DAC)

Awareness of their District Advisory Committee was one indicator of eligible participants' awareness that QUIPP was a district-organized program. As shown in Table 7, more than 75 percent of teacher trainers, language coordinators, and health coordinators were aware of their DAC; however, only about 40 percent of special education teachers and paraprofessionals reported knowing their DAC. Of those aware of their DAC, most

respondents knew of its role in planning and organizing professional development activities for district special educators, assessing eligible participants' professional development interests, and promoting QUIPP in the schools. While most eligible participants who responded were aware that teachers and supervisors served on DAC, fewer respondents knew that paraprofessionals, principals, and DASEs were also on the committee. More than one-half (55 percent) of the respondents requested more information on the function and composition of DAC, including selection of DAC members.

TABLE 7

Eligible Participants' Awareness of DAC
(N=1,304)

| Position | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Teacher Trainers (N=23) | 79.3 |
| Language/Health Coordinators (N=34) | 75.6 |
| Teachers (N=705) | 44.1 |
| Paraprofessionals (N=256) | 42.2 |
| First-Year Teachers (N=110) | 35.7 |
| General Education (Mod 5) Teachers (N=5) | 26.3 |
| Other* (N=171) | 43.8 |
| Overall (N=1,304) | 43.7 |

*This category includes speech teachers and guidance counselors.

- School-based staff, especially teachers and paraprofessionals, were least aware of the existence of their DAC.

Response to the Interest Inventory

To ensure that the professional development program was participant-driven, each district gathered input from the eligible staff on their professional development interests. A sample Interest Inventory (I.I.) assessment form was included in the QUIPP program guidelines, but DACs were free to develop their own I.I. format. The I.I. was used to determine eligible participants' preferences for formats, topics, and schedules.

Eligible participants' awareness of their district's Interest Inventory was one indicator of their awareness that QUIPP was a participant-driven program. Although almost all of the respondents (93 percent) were aware of the I.I., only 81 percent of teacher trainers, about 70 percent of teachers and language/health coordinators, and only 51 percent of paraprofessionals reported receiving it (see Table 8). Overall, less than two-thirds of the eligible participants reported receiving the I.I. However, the vast majority of those who reported receiving an Interest Inventory completed and returned it. Reasons for not returning the I.I. included not enough time given to review and complete it, not aware of eligibility, and not interested in QUIPP offerings. Some respondents requested that more variety and room for suggestions be provided on the I.I.

TABLE 8

Eligible Participants' Awareness of
the Interest Inventory
(N=2,661)

| Position | Percent of Respondents | |
|---|---|---|
| | I. I. Received | I.I. Returned[a] |
| Teachers (N=1,598) | 68.9 | 93.4 |
| Paraprofessionals (N=602) | 51.4 | 85.4 |
| Language/Health Coordinators (N=46) | 69.6 | 96.9 |
| Teacher Trainers (N=31) | 80.6 | 96.0 |
| Other[b] (N=384) | 59.8 | 92.1 |
| Overall (N=2,661) | 61.5 | 89.2 |

[a]Percentages based on those who received the Interest Inventory.
[b]This category includes speech teachers and guidance counselors.

- Only about 60 percent of the survey respondents reported receiving the I.I.
- Of those who received the I.I., 89 percent completed and returned it.

## QUIPP Offerings and Registration Materials

### Clarity of information provided about QUIPP offerings.

Seventy-nine percent of those responding to the survey indicated that they were informed of the available QUIPP activities from a list of offerings for their district. However, almost one-third of first-year special education teachers (a group that has only become eligible to participate this year) reported that they had not received this information.

The quality of information on QUIPP offerings was rated positively by more than half (55 percent) of the respondents, as can be seen in Table 9. However, a large percentage of respondents felt that the quality of the information provided by the program needed improvement.

TABLE 9

Eligible Participants' Ratings of the Quality of Information about QUIPP Activities (N=2,134)

| Ratings of Information | Percent of Positive Ratings |
|---|---|
| Clear/detailed content descriptions | 87.5 |
| Clear information about times, places | 62.9 |
| Clear and easy registration instructions | 55.2 |

- More than one-half (55 percent) of the respondents rated the quality of information positively.

In some districts, respondents noted that the time and place of activities and the number of college credits earned for participation were not listed, and that registration instructions were not clear. In addition, participants also requested basic information regarding the QUIPP program, including a description of the program and its goals, its planning and implementation (including how workshops and schedules are decided), who is eligible to participate, how to obtain registration information, and who to contact in the district if they had questions.

Participant rating of offerings. Eligible participants were asked how relevant the topics were to their professional interests. As can be seen in Table 10, most of the respondents felt that the offerings were very relevant. Among the features that eligible participants liked best about the program were the variety of courses offered; the variety of formats (e.g., workshops, college courses, retreats); the emphasis on practical, hands-on activities; and that the course offerings were based on input from the staff.

More than half of the eligible participants stated that the activity schedule was convenient for them, and an additional 25 percent stated that it was somewhat convenient. However, more special education teachers (21.1 percent) and paraprofessionals (17.6 percent) found the schedules inconvenient than did respondents from other categories.

TABLE 10

Eligible Participants' Ratings of the Relevance of Topics to Professional Interests (N=2,?44)

| Position | Percent of Respondents | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Relevant | Somewhat Relevant | Not Relevant |
| First-Year Teachers (N=203) | 76.8 | 20.2 | 3.0 |
| Teachers (N=1,268) | 68.8 | 26.5 | 4.7 |
| Paraprofessionals (N=405) | 65.4 | 30.5 | 4.2 |
| Language/Health Coordinators (N=34) | 76.5 | 20.6 | 2.9 |
| General Ed (Mod 5) (N=13) | 69.2 | 23.1 | 7.7 |
| Teacher Trainers (N=28) | 89.3 | 7.1 | 3.6 |
| Other[a] (N=299) | 60.0 | 33.1 | 10.9 |
| Overall (N=2,244) | 66.1 | 26.5 | 5.1 |

[a]This category includes speech teachers and guidance counselors.

- More than two-thirds of the eligible participants found the QUIPP program topics "very relevant" to their professional interests.

Reasons for non-participation. Forty-two percent of the respondents stated that they did not register for QUIPP activities. As can be seen in Table 11, the most common reason cited for non-participation in QUIPP activities was "after-school commitments" including child care responsibilities, other jobs, and participation in college courses. This may explain why some

respondents found that the schedule was inconvenient, as most districts offered activities after-school. Respondents suggested offering some courses during school time (i.e., lunch hour), weekends, and the summer. In many districts, however, interviewees indicated that the schedules provided a good variety of days (including weekends) and times, so that those who wanted to participate could find activities offered at convenient times.

TABLE 11
Eligible Participants' Reasons for Not Registering for QUIPP Activities
(N=1,127)

| Reason | Percent of Respondents | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Teachers (N=644) | Paras (N=272) | Other[a] (N=211) |
| Other/after-school commitments | 58.8 | 43.0 | 54.5 |
| Not interested in more training | 20.0 | 10.7 | 11.8 |
| List received too late | 8.6 | 5.5 | 5.7 |
| Intend to register | 8.2 | 18.8 | 4.7 |
| Unrelated to needs of students | 6.9 | 5.5 | 11.8 |
| Content too elementary | 6.1 | 1.5 | 10.0 |
| Unsafe class locations | 5.0 | 2.6 | 4.7 |
| Activities canceled | 3.4 | 5.1 | 3.8 |
| Barred from attending preferred activities | 3.1 | 5.1 | 7.1 |
| Other | 20.2 | 16.5 | 24.6 |

[a]This category includes language coordinators, teacher trainers, health coordinators, and eligible general education teachers, speech teachers, and guidance counselors.

- About one-half of the eligible participants said that they did not register for QUIPP activities because of other commitments.

Some of the "other" responses were that the same courses were offered as in previous years, credit courses were not offered, they did not receive information regarding QUIPP activities, and that they were not aware of eligibility.

SURVEY OF ACTUAL PARTICIPANTS

In the second phase of the evaluation, OREA evaluators surveyed participants in three representative activities in 15 districts about the quality of activities provided by the QUIPP program, the quality of instructors and activity materials, how participants applied what they learned, and the impact of the professional development training on participants and their students. Responses were received from 477 participants (71 percent).

Response to Activities

Only 23 of the respondents (5 percent) did not complete the courses for which they had registered. The most common reason for not completing the training was personal/family considerations. A small percentage of the participants did not complete the training because of factors related to the QUIPP activities, such as the content was not relevant to the participant's students, nothing new was being presented, or supplies were inadequate. In contrast to previous years, the content was reported to be at an appropriate level for the participants, and the activity sites were considered safe.

Participants' expectations of QUIPP activities. As seen in Table 12, many of the participants stated that they expected to

achieve professional growth or to gain practical skills to use with students from their participation in QUIPP activities. "Other" responses include gaining a better understanding of the students and how to best serve them, and developing increased awareness of current issues in special education.

TABLE 12

Participants' Expectations of Participation in QUIPP Activities

(N=410)

| Expectations | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Professional growth and development | 86.0 |
| Practical skills and techniques to use with students | 85.7 |
| Personal challenge and stimulation | 61.6 |
| A sense of professional renewal | 51.2 |
| Materials and supplies for classroom | 39.4 |
| Better acquainted with colleagues in the district | 34.6 |
| Credits towards career or pay advancement | 29.1 |
| Other expectations | 3.1 |
| No expectations | 0.8 |

- Over 85 percent of the participants expected professional growth or to gain practical skills from participation in QUIPP activities.

Participants were also asked how completely their expectations of QUIPP were met, using a scale of 0 (not at all) to 5 (completely). Eighty-one percent of the respondents answered at the positive end of the scale, indicating a rating of

four or five. Another 14 percent of the answers indicated a midpoint rating of three. In addition, 70 percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to continue training in the same subject, and many respondents suggested having follow-up or two-part courses.

Evaluation of instructors. As shown in Table 13, more than 95 percent of the respondents rated the instructors as satisfactory or excellent in all four of the categories.

TABLE 13

Participants' Assessment of Instructors
(N=457)

| Quality of Instructor | Ratings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Excellent | Satisfactory | Minimal |
| Knowledge of subject | 81.2 | 17.3 | 1.5 |
| Preparation & organization | 79.6 | 16.0 | 4.4 |
| Adaptability to participants' needs | 72.7 | 22.6 | 4.7 |
| Ability to relate to adult learners | 76.6 | 19.6 | 3.8 |

- About three-fourths of the participants rated QUIPP instructors as "excellent."

Assessment of presentations. Table 14 shows that the participants' evaluations of the presentations were very positive, with over 94 percent rating the presentations as satisfactory or excellent.

TABLE 14

Participants' Assessment of Presentations
(N=458)

| Quality of Presentations | Ratings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Excellent | Satisfactory | Minimal |
| Organization | 77.3 | 18.9 | 3.9 |
| Comprehensiveness | 74.4 | 20.9 | 4.7 |
| Instructor-trainee interaction | 72.0 | 23.5 | 4.5 |
| Interesting & stimulating | 71.2 | 23.4 | 5.4 |
| Practical | 71.3 | 24.0 | 4.7 |
| Appropriate to trainees' education and experience | 67.2 | 27.2 | 5.6 |
| Adaptable to participants' needs | 66.2 | 29.0 | 4.8 |
| Relevance to participants' students | 61.1 | 32.9 | 6.0 |

- About 70 percent of the participants rated QUIPP presentations as "excellent."

Assessment of materials. Overall, the participants gave a positive evaluation of the materials used, as can be seen in Table 15. Over 90 percent of all respondents rated the materials as satisfactory or excellent. In comparison to last year's results, more participants stated that they received adequate supplies for their classroom, although some respondents noted that more computers are needed to effectively implement what was learned in computer workshops.

TABLE 15

Participants' Assessment of Materials
(N=445)

| Quality of materials | Ratings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Excellent | Satisfactory | Minimal |
| Appropriate to subject | 70.6 | 26.7 | 2.7 |
| Facilitated participants' learning | 63.0 | 31.2 | 5.8 |
| Adequate supplies for participants' classrooms | 59.6 | 31.9 | 8.5 |
| Adequate supplies during training | 55.3 | 35.2 | 9.5 |
| Appropriate to participants' students | 52.1 | 39.4 | 8.5 |

- Over 90 percent of the respondents rated the materials used in QUIPP activities as excellent or satisfactory.

QUIPP Activity Impact on Participants

As shown in Table 16, respondents reported that the activities had a positive impact on them as educators, and that they felt more refreshed, competent, and confident with students. One respondent stated that "being treated as professionals lifted our professional competence, morale, and motivation." In addition, two general education (Mod 5) teachers noted that the professional development they received made them more aware of what is involved in the process of mainstreaming students.

Table 16

Program Impact on the Participants as Educators
(N=366)

| Participant feelings | Ratings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Much more | No change | Much less |
| Refreshed | 70.2 | 29.2 | 0.5 |
| Qualified/competent | 65.7 | 33.7 | 0.6 |
| Confident with students | 60.9 | 37.5 | 1.5 |
| Supported | 50.4 | 48.4 | 1.1 |
| Appreciated/valued by school system | 41.8 | 57.3 | 0.9 |

- More than one-half of the respondents stated that they felt more refreshed, competent, and confident as a result of participation in QUIPP activities.

Application of Learning in the Classroom

The majority of the respondents stated that they applied what they learned from QUIPP activities in their classrooms. One respondent noted that "the theory, curriculum guides, activities, and materials are appropriate and easy to apply." In addition, many claimed that they applied the behavior management techniques in their classrooms with much success. Many participants of QUIPP activities gave statements similar to the following:

- "Our students found out that learning can be fun."
- "QUIPP activities were excellent. The experiences were all brought back to the classroom."

Sixteen percent of the respondents indicated that they had not yet had the opportunity to apply what they had learned.

Of those who had applied what they had learned, 55 percent of the respondents stated that they had not encountered obstacles in applying what they had learned. "Other" responses included the need to modify the activity to meet the needs of the students (e.g., shorten the activities for students with attention difficulties).

TABLE 17

Obstacles in Applying New Knowledge and Skills
(N=207)

| Responses | Percent of Responses |
|---|---|
| No obstacles encountered | 55.1 |
| Teacher/para did not receive same training | 9.7 |
| Inadequate classroom supplies/equipment | 9.2 |
| Training not applicable to students | 8.2 |
| Insufficient training in the QUIPP activity | 7.7 |
| Training not practical/realistic | 4.3 |
| Uncooperative/unsupportive school administration | 3.9 |
| Other | 1.9 |

- A majority of the participants (55 percent) did not encounter obstacles in applying what they had learned.

Program Impact on Special Education Students

Participants who applied what they had learned from QUIPP activities in their classrooms were asked about the impact on their students. As shown in Table 18, 64 percent of the respondents stated that their students were more interested and involved in learning. In addition, one respondent remarked that "The LEGO materials allowed me a new avenue in which to enhance my students' communication skills. They enjoyed the activities I presented, and interacted with one another appropriately. The best part of the lesson was that my students thought that they were just playing." The respondents who had not, as yet, noticed changes in their students (12 percent) stated that it was too soon to expect changes. Insufficient training was cited by only one respondent as a possible reason.

Table 18

Program Impact on Students
(N=204)

| Impact | Percent of Responses |
|---|---|
| More interest/involvement in learning | 63.6 |
| Better understanding of material | 43.9 |
| More effective teacher-student communication | 40.5 |
| Better behavior | 38.0 |
| Better retention of material | 29.9 |

- Two-thirds of the participants said that their application of newly acquired skills and knowledge made their students more interested and involved in learning.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

The overall response to the QUIPP program was positive at both the central and district level. Awareness of the Central Advisory Committee has become more consistent among DAC members, and those who have had contact with CAC stated that communication has been helpful and supportive.

The DACs have, once again, been very successful in providing high quality, district-based, participant-driven, professional development programs. The process of planning and implementing the QUIPP program was rated very positively by DAC members, who continued to describe their committee as collaborative, cooperative, and participatory.

Some shifts in roles and responsibilities from administrative to school-based DAC members became apparent this year. Administrative tasks were performed by more teachers and paraprofessionals, while principals and DASEs have decreased their involvement in these tasks this year in comparison to previous years. In addition, teachers and paraprofessionals have become even more involved in the planning aspects of the program, and, in some districts, have also become involved in the implementation of the activities.

Respondents who participated in QUIPP activities also positively evaluated the quality of activities, instructors, and materials. Most respondents indicated that their expectations of

QUIPP activities were met, and participation positively affected their feelings of competence and confidence with students. Those who have had the opportunity to apply what they learned from QUIPP activities in their classrooms reported positive changes in their students' interest and involvement in learning.

Although the overall evaluation of QUIPP was positive, this evaluation also found some aspects of the program that can be improved. For instance, although DAC members have stated that networking with other DACs would be beneficial, in most districts only a minimal amount of networking has actually transpired. In addition, there is a need for better dissemination of information to the eligible staff about the QUIPP program. Eligible participants, especially first-year special education teachers, have requested more information about the role and function of QUIPP, the activities that are offered, and procedures for registration. Furthermore, the Interest Inventory (I.I.), which is used to develop each district's program of activities, was not received by about one-third of the eligible participants.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the results of this evaluation and from suggestions provided by the eligible and actual participants and DAC members.

### District Advisory Committee

- Increase networking with other districts. This could be accomplished by establishing cross-district meetings and newsletters.

- Provide information about the QUIPP program to increase eligible participants' awareness of the program, their DAC, and the requirements for eligibility.

- Provide more variety, and room for suggestions, on the Interest Inventory.

- Distribute registration information earlier. The information should specify the times and dates of the activities and credits earned from participation.

- Provide a greater variety of schedule choices, including weekend, evening, and summer options.

- Attempt to reach more first-year special education teachers to facilitate their registration and participation in QUIPP.

- Investigate the possibility of attending courses in other districts for eligible participants who have specialized interests or scheduling difficulties.

Central Advisory Committee

- Provide a QUIPP publication that gives both general information concerning the program and more assistance in regard to planning staff development programs.

- Facilitate networking through yearly QUIPP conferences.

- Provide funds for a QUIPP administrator at the district level.

- Provide DACs with training to improve communication, collaboration, decision-making, and team building.